Housing Nova Scotia

Annual Accountability Report

Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Housing
NOVA SCOTIA

Table of Contents

1.0 Accountability Statement 1

2.0 Message from Housing Nova Scotia 2

3.0 Financial Results 3

4.0 A New Housing Strategy for Nova Scotia 4

5.0 Measuring Our Performance 8

1.0 Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of Housing Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2014 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against Housing Nova Scotia's business plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of Housing Nova Scotia's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Housing Nova Scotia management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Housing Nova Scotia management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Housing Nova Scotia (formerly the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation) 2013-14 business plan.

Joanne Bernard
Minister responsible for Housing Nova Scotia

Kevin Malloy, CEO
Housing Nova Scotia

2.0 Message from Housing Nova Scotia

On behalf of Housing Nova Scotia, we are pleased to provide you with the first accountability report for this new organization. Our achievements in 2013-14 were significant as we started the implementation of the provincial housing strategy. This report highlights the significant work and related accomplishments based on our 2013-14 Business Plan.

Formerly known as the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation (NSHDC), Housing Nova Scotia is a government agency that creates opportunities for Nova Scotians to live in a good home that they can afford, in the community of their choice.

Our mantra: Opening Possibilities.

Our purpose is to meet the realities and challenges facing today's families and communities with the ability to make the most of opportunities, explore innovative models and forge new partnerships. Working with private sector developers, local government and community organizations, Housing Nova Scotia thrives to build healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities.

During the year, we were delighted to see some progress towards the development of mixed-income and mixed-tenure communities in Halifax. Working with our community partner Imagine Bloomfield, we have initiated a unique public engagement process that is driven by the community. We have also explored similar development in other communities.

One of our key priorities is to improve the quality of life of our most vulnerable populations – seniors, persons with disabilities, and the homeless. In 2013-14, we helped more than 1,000 seniors and persons with disabilities stay in their homes and communities longer. We also made a significant investment in our Housing Support Worker Program, which is a key pillar in our strategy to break the cycle of homelessness.

Nova Scotians are at the heart of everything we do and that's reflected in our business plan. Whether it's rethinking how to provide assistance through a variety of innovative programs that will bring new vitality to our communities and a better quality of life for the people who live in them or reshaping housing by ensuring our current stock is well-maintained for future generations, our clients are our reason for being.

The successes of the past year are proof of what we can accomplish. We, along with our dedicated staff and community partners, are part of something bigger. Together, we're doing great things – in our communities and in our neighbourhoods.

3.0 Financial Results

	Estimate 2013-14 ($ 000)	Actuals 2013-14 ($ 000)
Funding source		
Revenue from government sources	106,045	100,499
Revenue from rents	52,975	56,506
Interest, revenue from land sales, and other revenue	30,380	34,553
Total funding	**189,400**	**191,556**
Expenditure source		
Interest on long-term debt	44,100	43,425
Property management and operation	53,500	60,742
Maintenance and capital improvements	32,500	32,933
Housing renovation and affordable housing	21,900	17,368
Social housing subsidies	17,100	14,636
Depreciation of investment in social housing	17,800	19,731
Administration fee and cost of land sold	2,500	754
Early Learning and Child Care		807
Housing Strategy		411
Provision for doubtful accounts		749
Total expenditures	**189,400**	**191,556**

4.0 A New Housing Strategy for Nova Scotia

After launching an extensive public consultation process with over 500 Nova Scotians participating, the Government of Nova Scotia released the first Housing Strategy for Nova Scotia in spring 2013. This Strategy's vision is to ensure that Nova Scotians can find the housing choice that is right for them and their families, at a price they can afford, in a healthy, vibrant community that offers the services, supports, and opportunities they need. In response to this, the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation was renamed Housing Nova Scotia and began to transition to meet this goal by developing a continuous planning process, which will be reflected in our annual business plans. Housing Nova Scotia is positioning itself to meet its goal and will continue to refine its approaches to doing so.

Housing Nova Scotia Progress and Accomplishments 2013-14

Housing Nova Scotia recognizes housing as a basic need, fundamental to personal well-being, and the basis upon which to build healthy and sustainable communities. Our 2013-14 business plan indicates the five strategic goals and five priorities against which our performance for the year can be measured. Working towards these strategic goals is integral to achieving the multi-year objectives outlined in the Housing Strategy for Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals and Priorities

I. **Creating healthier, more vibrant communities through diverse mixed-market, mixed-use developments**

2013-14 Priority: Mixed-market developments

Housing Nova Scotia is moving more towards the development of mixed-income and mixed-tenure communities. It has and will continue to partner with the non-profit and private sectors to support these developments.

- In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia continued to develop plans for the Bloomfield site, located in the north end of Halifax. Bloomfield will be a mixed-market, mixed-use development with space for community groups, retail activities, condos, and affordable housing units. Its development will occur over multiple phases and already involves community partnerships and a public engagement process.

- Housing Nova Scotia is also exploring development opportunities for College Park in Windsor. This new project will be a mixed-tenure community and will contain units for home ownership. This past year, Housing Nova Scotia engaged a local surveyor and submitted an application to the Town of Windsor for preliminary development approval. The application is currently under review by the Town of Windsor.

- In preserving and rehabilitating existing housing within the province, Housing Nova Scotia maintains a mixed-market outlook. This past year, 66 units were created, and of the 66, 38 were repurposed from non-residential to residential space. Many of these units are located in downtown areas, making use of existing infrastructure and focused in built-up areas within walking distance of services.

II. Making housing more affordable for low- to modest- income Nova Scotians

2013-14 Priority: Improve the range of affordable housing options

Housing Nova Scotia continues to work with partners and individually to create units and develop new homes for low- to modest- income Nova Scotians.

- In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia began working with the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association to develop a parcel of land in Cole Harbour. Taking a proactive approach, Housing Nova Scotia is working to ensure the development provides options that are economically feasible for homebuyers.

- Housing Nova Scotia is committed to increasing the range of affordable housing options through other developments as well, including the Bloomfield development in Halifax and College Park in Windsor.

III. Increasing levels of home ownership and personal equity

2013-14 Priority: Pilot new programs to enable home ownership

- In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia initiated a jurisdictional scan of best practice home ownership program development and delivery. This review included Canadian as well as international jurisdictions. Research and analysis in this area continues and will support Housing Nova Scotia as it works to develop and implement home ownership models appropriate for Nova Scotia.

- Housing Nova Scotia initiated discussions with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada to develop a limited equity co-operative. This pilot is currently in its exploratory phase and dialogue is ongoing.

- Housing Nova Scotia's work with the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association to support a development in Cole Harbour will lead to the development of smaller economically priced homes. In supporting this development, we are helping to demonstrate a new market of affordability.

IV. Developing and leveraging partnerships with municipalities, business, and social enterprise

2013-14 Priority: Community revitalization partnerships

Building vibrant communities through partnerships with all levels of government, the private sector, and the not-for-profit community was a priority for Housing Nova Scotia in 2013-14. This priority is in keeping with our goal to develop more healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities in our province. It also aligns with Housing Nova Scotia's work as a catalyst for partnership and change.

- In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia worked extensively with community partners to support work on the Bloomfield development in the north end of Halifax. This work speaks to our commitment to have Bloomfield support a healthy, vibrant, and diverse community and includes a public engagement process.

- Through its partnership with the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association on the development in Cole Harbour, Housing Nova Scotia is helping to demonstrate diverse citizen demand for housing within the province.

- Also in 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia began to develop a neighbourhood improvement initiative to revitalize older urban neighborhoods. In response to a community-driven effort, the Government of Nova Scotia announced in June 2013 that Alice Street in Truro would become the first designated area under this initiative. As part of the Alice Street neighbourhood improvement:

    - Capital improvements to a provincially-owned seniors building have been made.

    - A capital contribution through Housing Nova Scotia's New Rental Program was made to support the development of 14 new affordable housing units on a former Alice Street school site. Phase one of this project is expected to be ready for occupancy in spring 2014.

    - A program to assist with minor exterior repairs and improvements for homeowners and landlords will be underway in early 2014-15.

V. Improving the quality of life of our most vulnerable populations- seniors, persons with disabilities, and the homeless

2013-14 Priority: Support for community living

Housing Nova Scotia supports community living for vulnerable populations. This includes investing in home adaptation and renovation options for seniors and persons with disabilities to help keep them in their homes and communities. It also includes working to support community integration of homeless individuals and at risk populations by investing in shelters and transition homes.

- In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia provided home adaptation and renovation options for 1,104 seniors and persons with disabilities to enable them to stay in their homes and communities.

- This past year, Housing Nova Scotia also provided more than $100,000 to make improvements in eight Nova Scotia shelters through the Shelter Enhancement Program.

- With a focus on the Housing First model, Housing Nova Scotia was one of the leading sponsors of a local two-day homelessness conference in November 2013. This conference of the Housing and Homelessness Network included keynotes from prominent figures in housing, homelessness and the Housing First approach.

- Housing Nova Scotia will continue to work with partners to identify ways to implement a Housing First approach in Nova Scotia to support homeless individuals and at risk populations in finding a stable, safe, and permanent place to call home. This includes our involvement in the Homelessness Partnering Strategy through our voice on community advisory boards.

- In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia invested approximately $450,000 in the Housing Support Worker Program to help transition homeless individuals or individuals at risk of homelessness into stable long term housing options. Eight housing support worker positions are funded through this program. This past year these support workers served 1,415 people with needs in areas including life skill learning, emotional support, and crisis intervention. Of those, 382 received help in transitioning into longer term housing options. Housing Nova Scotia's programs also allowed for 54 persons living in emergency shelters to transition into safe and affordable longer term housing.

5.0 Measuring Our Performance

Organizations use performance measures to track progress in meeting strategic goals and in achieving desired outcomes. Measures must be meaningful and informative. Further, they must be appropriately supported with systems to ensure consistent data gathering and reporting.

As noted earlier in this report, 2013-14 was a year that saw the beginning of a transformation for our organization. A new housing strategy was released and Housing Nova Scotia was created. As a result of these foundational steps toward our transformation, Housing Nova Scotia did not advance as far as intended at the outset of the year in establishing a number of the measures that had been identified. As noted in our 2014-15 business plan, we will be creating a new accountability and performance measurement framework in collaboration with our new Advisory Board. Developing this framework and establishing the Advisory Board were key actions identified under the new Housing Strategy and we continue to move forward.

Below, we report on the status of measures identified in our 2013-14 business plan and provide results against stated targets for those measures for which supporting systems were in place.

Note: *Numbers reported below are tracked through data maintained by Housing Nova Scotia.*

Measures: Percentage of satisfied clients/public housing tenants & Number of complaints

What do these measures tell us?

These measures are intended to track the satisfaction of Nova Scotians who receive assistance through our affordable housing programs or who are among our public housing tenants as well as the number and nature of complaints related to the program and service delivery.

Where are we now?

Housing Nova Scotia is committed to providing high quality service to all Nova Scotians who may be seeking information about and/or assistance under our programs. While formal systems were not established in 2013-14 to allow us to gather data to support these measures, any issues raised related to client service were addressed on a case by case basis, with appropriate follow-up action undertaken by staff as required.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia remains committed to client service. In the coming year, measures to assist in assessing client service will be identified through the development of our new accountability and performance measurement framework

Measure: Number of new homes and rental units

What does this measure tell us?

This measure is related to our priority of making housing more affordable for low- to modest- income Nova Scotians and demonstrates Housing Nova Scotia's efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing units, all of which are sound, suitable, and sustainable. There is also a concentrated effort by Housing Nova Scotia to encourage the development of these units in mixed-use and mixed-income areas where possible.

Where are we now?

In 2013-14, under the Canada-Nova Scotia Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement (IAH Agreement), there was a total investment of approximately $23 million. This joint funding arrangement allowed for the creation of 66 new affordable rental units and preservation of 119 existing affordable rental units. Housing Nova Scotia also assisted over 2,000 homeowners to complete needed repairs this past year.

Where do we want to be?

The Government of Nova Scotia will be entering into another agreement with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for 2014-19. This new five year IAH Agreement will ensure Housing Nova Scotia continues to increase the supply of affordable housing within the province. This measure will be further refined in alignment with our 2014-15 business plan and development of our new accountability and performance measurement framework

Measure: Number of new accessible/supportive homes

What does this measure tell us?

This measure links to our strategic goal of improving the quality of life of our most vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, seniors, and homeless individuals.

Where are we now?

In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia continued to work to support home repairs and adaptations for seniors and persons with disabilities. This past year, 191 homes were modified to support accessibility within the home. A further 43 homes were modified to support wheelchair access specifically.

Where do we want to be?

With the IAH Agreement 2014-19, Housing Nova Scotia will continue to support Nova Scotians through ongoing delivery of these programs. These programs focus on home modifications to allow individuals to stay in their homes and communities. This measure will be further refined in keeping with our 2014-15 business plan and development of our new accountability and performance measurement framework.

Measure: Number of home repairs and adaptations

What does this measure tell us?

This measure tracks the number of home repairs and adaptations, which will improve access to better, healthier, and safer affordable housing within the province. This links to the availability and demand for repair and adaptation programs within Nova Scotia.

Where are we now?

Home repairs and adaptations are provincially and federally funded, both under the Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement and otherwise. Under the IAH Agreement, in 2013-14 we preserved 962 homes through major health and safety related repairs. Also under the IAH Agreement, 1,104 homes of seniors and persons with disabilities received health and safety repairs or home adaptations to enable them to continue to live independently in their own homes. In addition, through a provincial program, Housing Nova Scotia provided funding to upgrade 48 homes this past year. This is a total of 2,114 homes preserved in 2013-14.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia will continue to deliver home repair and adaptation programs. Delivery of these programs will be supported by funding through the new Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement. Also in 2014-15, an additional $1.5 million is being invested in home repairs and upgrades to help more seniors stay in their homes.

Measure: Number of new homeowners

What does this measure tell us?

This measure is intended to help us monitor the number of new homeowners entering the housing market and identify new opportunities for homeownership for low- and moderate- income households in Nova Scotia.

Where are we now?

While in 2013-14 we did not formally establish programs and supporting systems to help monitor activity related to home ownership, Housing Nova Scotia initiated some research to identify best practices in home ownership program development and delivery. In addition, Housing Nova Scotia continues to explore new affordable home ownership options in the Bloomfield and proposed College Park developments.

Where do we want to be?

In its 2014-15 business plan, Housing Nova Scotia has outlined its plan to offer paths to homeownership. As part of our upcoming programs, individuals working towards homeownership will be required to complete a course on homeownership.

Measure: Percentage of households in core housing need

What does this measure tell us?

An individual is in core housing need if her/his housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards as set by the CMHC and s/he would have to spend 30% or more of her/his before tax income to pay the median rent of an alternative home in the local market that meets all three criteria.

Where are we now?

Core housing need is measured through census data and is available every five years. Given the launch of the National Household Survey in 2011, results of core housing need are not comparable between 2006 and 2011, and the 2011 core housing need figures will not be released until fall 2014. According to the CMHC's data released for 2006, 43,760 households in Nova Scotia were in core housing need.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia is committed to providing programs to help low and moderate income Nova Scotians access safe, suitable, and affordable housing. In developing its new performance and accountability framework, Housing Nova Scotia will be considering other appropriate measures of housing related needs in Nova Scotia, with a specific focus on housing affordability within the province.

Measure: Number of persons accessing shelters

What does this measure tell us?

This measure is intended to help demonstrate the demand for shelters within the province.

Where are we now?

In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia provided more than $100,000 in funding to eight shelters to complete needed repairs in order to continue to serve some of our most vulnerable citizens. Housing Nova Scotia also funds eight housing support workers who aided 1,415 individuals who were homeless or at risk of homelessness this past year, with 382 of them transitioned to more stable housing. In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia also worked with key partners to discuss issues related to homelessness and opportunities to apply the Housing First model in a Nova Scotia context.

Where do we want to be?

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia will continue to provide funding to Nova Scotia shelters and track assistance provided through data collected under the housing support worker program. We will also continue to track the number of applicants and the units upgraded under the Shelter Enhancement Program. This program provides support to shelters, second stage housing, and transition houses. We will also look for ways to support the implementation of the Housing First model and continue to work to support those that are homeless and at risk for homelessness through funding of housing support workers.

Measure: Number of new partnerships

What does this measure tell us?

This measure is defined as the number of new partnerships into which Housing Nova Scotia enters to invest in affordable housing for Nova Scotians.

Where are we now?

In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia continued to foster and develop partner relationships. We worked with a community partner on developing a community engagement process for the Bloomfield site. We have also partnered with the United Way to help address homelessness and affordable housing within Halifax. Sitting on the Community and Rural and Remote Advisory Boards, Housing Nova Scotia will also help shape how homelessness initiatives are developed and implemented within the province under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. This past year, Housing Nova Scotia worked with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada to explore a pilot project related to a home equity co-op. In addition, Housing Nova Scotia is working with different partners to display new markets of affordability and homeownership options, including the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association as well as Habitat for Humanity.

Where do we want to be?

Building partnerships is one of the five themes of the Housing Strategy. Successful implementation will require Housing Nova Scotia to work collaboratively with all levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors and other parties with a related interest. The formation and nurturing of relationships has become an integral part of our day to day program and service delivery. Housing Nova Scotia will be working to identify appropriate indicators of performance and accountability with respect to partnerships.

Measure: Social, environmental, and economic contributions made by partners

What does this measure tell us?

This measure is intended to encompass the broader implications of our partners' contributions as well as their financial contributions to Housing Nova Scotia's affordable housing programs.

Where are we now?

In 2013-14, Housing Nova Scotia's partners' leveraged $2.1 million towards new rental housing and rental housing preservation within Nova Scotia. These contributions helped reduce the costs of affordable rental housing in the province.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia considers the social, environmental, and economic contributions of all new developments- including those developed by partner organizations- and will continue to do so. Our Housing Strategy highlights the need for our developments and those of partners to be environmentally friendly, socially interactive, and economically sound.

Measures: Cost per housing unit & Percent change in asset value

What do these measures tell us?

These measures are intended to help provide an indication of sustainability, public value and return on investment through the investments that Housing Nova Scotia makes on behalf of the province in affordable and public housing.

Where are we now?
Housing Nova Scotia manages its assets regularly through capital management planning. This includes our public housing units as well as new and old acquired assets. Housing Nova Scotia monitors property asset information on the major components of buildings and the expected cost and year of replacement. We also provide guidelines to housing authorities to support standardization and decision making.

Where do we want to be?

In 2014-15, Housing Nova Scotia is investing $4 million under the Social Housing Agreement to upgrade the physical condition of the public housing portfolio. The focus will be on:

- building upgrades ($2.5 million) – e.g., repair and replace deteriorating roofs, windows, doors, siding and upgrade older heating systems and public area flooring in seniors' buildings
- health and safety upgrades (approximately $1 million) – e.g., replacing sprinklers, ensure building still meet fire regulations, upgrading fire alarm systems to warn seniors about fires; and,
- accessibility improvements (about $500,000) – e.g., upgrade public corridors, exterior walkways and parking areas.

Also in 2015, Housing Nova Scotia anticipates assuming ownership of the Bloomfield School property in north end Halifax. This will increase our assets and could be reported in Housing Nova Scotia's consolidated financial statement for the year ending March 31, 2015 if the sale is finalized prior to the end of the fiscal year.

In developing a new accountability and performance framework in 2014-15, consideration will be given to identifying the most appropriate measures of our regular asset portfolio management activities.

Measures: Employee engagement index

What do these measures tell us?

The employee engagement index was developed by the Public Service Commission to assess employee engagement across government. Through a biennial survey, provincial government employees can express their satisfaction as it relates to their work and overall level of engagement.

Where are we now?

The most recent Employee Engagement Survey was conducted in 2013. At the time, head office Housing Nova Scotia staff were structurally part of the Employment Support, Income Assistance and Housing Division within the Department of Community Services. Regional Housing Services staff reported to their respective Department of Community Services Regional Administrators. Survey results for 2013 were

reported based on this old structure and results for housing authority staff were reported separately. Due to changes in the organizational structure, it is difficult to extract an engagement score from the survey results that accurately reflects engagement for employees of Housing Nova Scotia.

Where do we want to be?

Housing Nova Scotia believes having an engaged workforce helps to ensure that Nova Scotians receive the best service possible. Within the new Housing Nova Scotia organization, employee engagement will be an area of focus. In 2014-15, efforts will be made to identify the key drivers of engagement for employees within Housing Nova Scotia.